THE EYE:

BY OBADIAH OPTIC.

——VARIOUS OBJECTS FROM THE SENSE,
VARIOUSLY REPRESENTING. MILTON.

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE EYE.

MR. OPTIC,

LAST evening, I happened to take up the 12th number of the *Eye*—it was very strange that your essay on ætherial beings claimed my first attention—pray tell me, which of the invisibles had so much sympathy, as to pity me for my incredulity and direct me to your observations for conviction?—Indeed, Mr. OPTIC, tho' when a boy I often heard tales which might exceed in extravagance the ideas you express, yet I was ever of such an incredulous disposition as that the only use of which I found them was, they supplied me with the machinery necessary for love poems, which you know, would be nothing without nymphs, sylphs, &c.

But I was not a little surprised to see the subject seriously treated, especially by the nephew of ZEBEDEE FORESIGHT, and almost induced to think the old gentleman had given you a lift, till I saw your own signature. Are you indeed sincere, when you suggest that mankind have progressed in infidelity, because in this age, when the light of truth enlivens the world, and has dispelled the clouds of error, they are prone to reject the fanciful notions of their romantic ancestors?—It is to me a matter of no great wonder, that in former ages, persons of fruitful imaginations have expressed their thoughts figuratively, and to help the understanding in conceiving of their meaning, or to give sublimity to their stile, mixed with their ideas a machinery which they never supposed would be received as a reality.

You endeavour to strengthen your argument by adverting to certain parts of scripture. That there are angels and spiritual beings *in Heaven*, none will deny who believe in the doctrines of revelation, and the immortality of the soul; but that there are faries, elves, gnomes, sylphs, beenshie, &c. will require a counter-revelation to prove; and I think it is a suffi-

cient reason for disbelieving their existence, that we have no account of them in the sacred writings. SAUL's evil angel, I believe, was simply the temper of his mind, the pride of his heart, and want of confidence in the GOD of Israel. As to the witch of Endor, it was not more extraordinary for the credulous and weak minded Jews to believe she was an agent of a supernatural being, than for some of the superstitious in our day, to put confidence in the oracles of gypsies or fortune tellers—besides, a little investigation concerning this witch, will be sufficient to disqualify her as evidence in favour of your ærial system:—When SAUL came to her, she did not know him, and doubtless was preparing her deceptions; but when he desired her to bring up SAMUEL—SAMUEL immediately appeared personally, the woman knew him to be the prophet himself;* here was no disguise, he was not raised by her means, as appears by her consternation, and she recognizes SAUL, perhaps from the belief that such an appearance would not be permitted to a lesser personage than the king of Israel; thus it seems that the practices of this woman were altogether wicked and deceptious, and the belief in supernatural appearances is virtually condemned.

We have also reason to suppose, if our language has any meaning in it, that the demoniac doctrine is still on as good a foundation as formerly; for do we not often hear the assertion "The devil is in him!" and the like?

In the declaration of PAUL concerning different bodies, I think his meaning is plainly discoverable;—speaking of celestial bodies, he undoubtedly refers to those which compose the planetary system; terrestrial and natural bodies require no further explanation than their designation; by spiritual (or glorified) bodies, he certainly means the inhabitants of Heaven, who we may infer from scriptural doctrine, are incorruptible materiality.

"A spirit [ideal object] hath not flesh and bones," which are constituent parts of a body, therefore, if they have no bodies, they possess no materiality, consequently are nothing more than ideas; and it certainly cannot be considered improbable, that ideas present forms to the imagination, which have no real existence; of this kind was the spirit or phantom which passed before the face of ELIPHAZ, and of such are all visions, tho' for wise purposes, they are sometimes sent of GOD, to manifest his providence in the affairs of men.

* The word *himself*, I am told, immediately follows *Samuel*, in the original, though it is omitted in our translation.

I would inquire whether your ærial beings are immortal? If so, I see no cause why they may not be angels, and this granted, your chasm still remains, though I accede what you ask with respect to grades: But I do not find such an immense void as you imagine, and surely the PSALMIST did not, when he thus sang—"For thou hast made him [man] a *little* lower than the *angels*, and hast crowned him with glory and honour."

Indeed, Mr. OPTIC, I hope you will reconsider the subject, and tho' I may not be metaphysician enough to refute all your arguments, I hope you will not condemn me for unbelief;—and be assured, I shall never intrude when you may be in the society of your *imaginary nothings*. ABRAHAM AIRY.

ORIGINAL.

ON THE MOTION OF FLUIDS IN VEGETABLES.

(concluded from page 147.)

NOT to say any thing of the anatomical structure of plants, in favour of the opinion that they are organized bodies, let us attend to their physiology.

That plants are organized, may be rendered sufficiently obvious, by tracing the analogy which subsists between them and animals, even from the embryo state.

There is certainly a very striking analogy between a seed and an egg. Both require an increase of temperature to be brought to life. The new embryo of each, is at first supplied with aliment, which it produces.—As the egg-shell breaks, so do the seed-leaves fall off, as soon as the young plant has acquired sufficient strength to procure its own nourishment.

The seed is *mostly* divided into two lobes; some however, as wheat, rye, barley, oats, buck-wheat and many others, have only one. Every healthy seed contains two elementary parts of a plant, the herb and root. The former may be observed projecting more or less prominently in all seeds; the latter is contained within the lobe or lobes. The saccharine fermentation is necessary for the vegetation of seeds. When a seed is burried in the earth, at a temperature of about 45°, moisture is absorbed, which softens and swells the lobes: A decomposition of the moisture, or water, takes place, and its oxygen uniting to the carbon of the seed, carbonic acid gas is formed, and the quantity of hydrogen is thereby proportionably increased. By this means the parenchymatous matter of

the seed is converted into a kind of sweet emulsion. This now affords nourishment to the root through the medium of vessels appropriated to that purpose. The fermentation having rent assunder the lobes, the root strikes into the ground, having been previously distended by the same cause. The herb being likewise distended, is raised above the surface of the ground, leaving with it the lobes. As soon as they come in contact with the air, they begin to be transformed into leaves. The young plant now derives nourishment from the earth, and the leaves become indispensible, for the purpose of absorption, respiration, and transpiration.

I leave this account of vegetation for those who are curious upon the subject, to compare it with the process of generation and maturation in the animal kingdom. Striking analogies may be designated. Who does not discover in this process, in vegetables, unquestionable marks of vitality, and consequently organization?

I proceed next to consider the second proposition, which has been advanced, involving the question of irritability in plants.

That plants possess this principle, in common with animals, I infer,

1st. From a contractile power in many plants, which cannot be explained upon mechanical principles. Under this head may be enumerated individuals of the genus dionæa, alimosa and drosera. The barberry which grows in many places near this city, possesses stamens which may be made to approach the pistils, or female *organa genetalia* by puncturing them with a sharp pointed instrument. A similar operation will produce a like effect on the male organs of many other plants.

2d. I infer the irritability of vegetables from the fact, that in certain experiments* which were made on the circulation of sap in the vernal months, cold acting as a sedative stopped its circulation. This occurred during the cold parts of the day, and during the night. Moreover, in some cool days the sap continued to flow on the south side only of the tree, while on the north, it was stagnated: This must be ascribed to an abstraction of the stimulus of heat.

3d. And lastly, I infer vegetable irritability from the effects of electricity on plants. As in animals, death is induced by electricity, without any marks of derangement in their anatomical structures, so death (according to CAVALLO) has been

* Dr. HALE's.

occasioned in plants, by shocks of electricity, without any appearance of disorganization. If I have been successful in what I have hitherto attempted to prove, it will scarcely be denied, that the circulation of the fluids of plants, is owing *principally* to the irritability of their vessels. Capillary attraction, and solar influence, unquestionably have some agency in the important function of vegetable circulation. But surely, without an irritable principle, it would be impossible to conceive of the great variety of offices performed by the vessels of the plant.

How, without the co-operation of this principle, could the *ultimately* component parts of vegetables, hydrogen, carbon, and oxygen, (with a few other occasional ingredients) be changed into so great a variety of substances as we know to exist. Such, for instance are the following—

Gluten, fixed and volatile oils, fœcula, sugar, mucilage, camphor, resin, gum-resin, balsams and others. As this principle is sufficient for the present purpose, I shall go no-farther in the investigation of vegetable physiology. But I strongly suspect, that Dr. Darwin did not ascribe too much to plants, when he allowed them the attribute of sensibility. Irritability and sensibility are certainly more intimately connected than is commonly imagined. B.

ORIGINAL.

LETTER TO JEREMIAH LISTLESS.

DEAR JERRY,

I GAVE you in my first letter, a sketch of the manners and fashions of the belles of this great city—by some means, a copy of that letter fell into the hands of some one of the citizens, and was laid before the public: I am highly-delighted with its reception among the ladies; in less than one week after its appearance, there was as great a bustle among them as there was with the Strasburghers, when the courteous stranger introduced his huge nose among them. How little did I think, when I carelessly scratched off those simple remarks, that they would excite so much attention, and be received by the ladies so much to my wishes.—I have been encountered by a Miss Lively, with all the fury of an irritated female zealous to defend her *dearest rights*. You remember, I suppose, when we were boys, if we caught a hog by the ears, in order to perform our mischievous experiments on it, that we

had the whole herd in a moment upon us, gnashing their teeth, and squeeling outrageously; so, having touched Miss LIVELY's conscience too roughly, by my observations, she has screamed out, and the whole multitude of the ladies have assailed me, chattering, scratching and squeeling, to my infinite delight; but I really fear lest Mr. OPTIC's '*Eye*' may be scratched out (by pens) for publishing my letter in his agreeable miscellany. They have caricatured me most ludicrously; they have, without ceremony, put mochasins on my feet; given me bison locks, and wrapped me up in a blanket! now only look at that JERRY! O, that I who consider myself a true student of CHESTERFIELD, and who am a favourite of all the ladies here, no doubt of Miss LIVELY herself—that I should be stuck up as a scarecrow to frighten them.

I find it is dangerous to meddle with the ladies in any way, but more especially to ridicule what their "souls hold dear," I mean their fashions—I have read an anecdote, of a lady wondering at three things—*viz.*: 1st. That little boys threw stones into the apple trees to knock down apples, when if they would let them alone, they would fall themselves; 2d. That men went to war to kill one another, when if they would only let one another alone, they would all die of themselves, and 3d. That the gentlemen went after the girls, when if they would only stay at home, the girls would run after them; now I would add a fourth wonder, which is, I wonder why the gentlemen are such fools as to expose the follies of the ladies' fashions, when the ladies expose them themselves?

I wish, for my part, I had not opened my lips, or put pen to paper on such a subject—but who can be found more proper to judge of pure morality, or the beauty or ugliness of fashions, than a stranger, whose taste is unsophisticated by that "monster Custom which all sense doth eat?"—I already begin to be reconciled to some fashionable frippery at which my unsullied taste at first revolted—it is not because my taste improves, but because custom has changed its nature. Every one has, by nature, that within him, independent of education, which distinguishes at first sight betwixt beauty and deformity, and I hold it as a maxim, that in every age and nation, the *prime nature* of the human mind, being formed by the same great AUTHOR, is the same—and moreover, I have always thought that genius resembled the bed-bug, that animal of "pompous gait," which, as PINDAR says, inhabits alike the royal couch or the straw bed of a beggar; condescending to visit alike the wild romantic and unhacked forests of the west-

ern savages, or the all-polished and all-enlightened city of Philadelphia.

But let us have no more of this; I know that you, JERRY, are longing to hear something more of the fashions and manners of the ladies of Philadelphia—I still flourish among the fair sex, and being pretty well versed in the mysteries of CHESTERFIELD, possessed of effrontery by nature, and being a stranger withal, my dear JERRY, I assure you I am caressed universally—while ROBERT RUSTIC is torn to "tatters, to very rags," I dash about unsuspected, and laugh in my sleeve at Miss LIVELY :—It puts me in mind of a boy throwing a scarecrow into a farm-yard among ducks, geese and chickens, they are all set cackling and quacking, and vent their fury on the scarecrow, while the boy laughs behind the hedge unsuspected—let them pick away at 'the *rustic*,' I am still welcomed among them.

The ladies of Philadelphia are very gay, and they have very many sources of amusement, as the assemblies, practising-balls, gardens, and a dozen others—you may be sure it is amusing to me to see how dexterously they "handle their feet" at their balls.—It was at one of these that I first discovered the practice of ladies' painting their faces—there was a Miss at one of those meetings not long since, who appeared the brightest star of the whole constellation; her form was bewitchingly elegant; her face blushed like a morning cloud; her nose was more elevated that any of the rest, and sometimes, like that of the pugg dog, the *lower* end was the *highest;* her load of jewels amounted to more than any of her companions' by three hundred dollars, and such was her brilliancy, that I assure you, the sight of her was an admirable treat to simple R. RUSTIC—in "cutting a pigeon wing" with her utmost exertion, she exhausted herself, and fell to the floor—all at first concluded she was fainted, but she was soon surrounded by doctors, one of whom strenuously asserted she could not be fainted, inasmuch as she retained her natural rosy colour; I immediately concluded it was only affectation, till some of the ladies explained the mystery by saying, Miss was painted! The doctor relinquished his theory, and made off, muttering execrations against the ladies for being as changeable within as weathercocks, while their faces, which should change with every passion or feeling, were unalterable, even by fainting, or death! Her situation being settled upon, they immediately washed her face with cold water—she was as

pale as a ghost in a moment, and I was about leaving the house, when, to my astonishment, she rose up and stalked across the room, and put me in mind of one of the "weird sisters" in *Macbeth!*

I am very fond of dancing, and consider it an innocent amusement in itself; therefore am far from censuring the ladies on that head—but they often connect profanity with their amusements. I may hereafter give you some account of their card-playing, &c. They are generally fond of evening walks, morning walks, and *sunday walks*.

On my first arrival in Philadelphia, I very naturally took the "center square" for a place of public worship, inasmuch as I always found a vast concourse of ladies and gentlemen there on every sabbath; but seeing that no one entered the house, I concluded it must be a place of religious exercises in imitation of the Indians; I behaved with great solemnity at first, and really admired the devotion with which the ladies walked round and round and round again—I was confirmed in this opinion, when I saw a great number of them on their knees in the grass; but BILLY FLASH has informed me since, that they were gathering four leaved clover. The "center *square*" is a beautiful *round* inclosure, with a circular gravel walk, where the ladies have a sublime view of grass, of lombardy poplars, of the outside of the water-works, and of the beautiful black smoke which rolls out of its top in clouds.

The gentlemen seat themselves on the fence, to have a view of the girls, while they circumambulate the water-works: When I first entered the *track*, I thought, from the inquisitive, confounding stares of the girls, that I had intruded on their devotions, but having enquired of a boy near me, he told me it was not the case—I passed on, was still stared at: I now thought my face was smutted, or my neck-cloth discomposed—I enquired of another boy—he replied all was right—I passed on—was still stared at! I now concluded they stared at me for my awkwardness in dress or manners, and retired, not a little mortified, to my lodgings—BILLY FLASH has told me since, it is only a way the ladies as well as the gentlemen have got in Philadelphia. With due deference to the municipality of this city, I would suppose it necessary to frame laws prohibiting, such profane amusements. It is probable however, that a law would not restrain them in this case, as I find, in violation of the corporation law, and the law of delicacy, they still play cards!

As the ladies are fond of shewing themselves, they consequently visit all public places, and among the rest, they go to church for *pass-time* and to be seen. If they would confine themselves to the ball-room or theatre and there riot, dissipate and play cards, pretty souls, I would not say a syllable against them; but when I see the sacred temple of the MOST HIGH profaned, when I see smiles, nods, and winks, with other actions, not only irreligious, but incompatible with the modesty and decency which I always look for in the fair sex, I cannot be silent. Not a sunday passes that I do not see something censurable in their conduct—no longer ago than last sunday I witnessed a most obstinate contest between two ladies about their dresses—not a word was uttered, good, bad or indifferent, but I understood all they *would* have said—Miss X cast an envious glance at Miss Z, which Miss Z returned with equal energy; Miss X fixed her huge bonnet on her head *a-la-mode* and then gave Miss Z a triumphant glance, which was as much as to say—my bonnet is most elegant! Miss Z felt the force of her argument, and turned the flowered side of her beautiful fan to Miss X, and gave it a significant flirt, which meant neither more or less than—my fan is prettiest. Miss X's spirits were roused, she threw back her hair, gave her head an emphatic toss, stuck forward her pretty face, which any one might have understood meant—she had the handsomest face. Miss Z made her face more horrible than ever; frowned with terrifying expression, and cast a boastful look at her waist—who could not have understood her appeal? Miss X pouted and frowned and told her by her look that—she lied! The contest continued very probably through the whole sermon, but I did not choose to pay longer attention to it.—Thus, my dear JERRY, have I seen ladies and gentlemen sitting within hearing of a most sublime discourse with perfect indifference—and while I have followed the venerable orator in his enthusiastic strains of inspired eloquence "high above all height;" my soul swelling within me, and the tear of devotional rapture bursting from my eyes, a fop has sat before me, coolly biting the head of his cane, or a conceited belle carefully adjusting her dress!—Even if I were an atheist, my dear JERRY, I could allow the sublime truths inculcated by the orator to be fiction, join him with my imagination and listen with pleasure.—Is this the refinement of civilized society? Is this the adoration which education teaches us to offer the DEITY! rather let me join the Indians

to adore their great spirit *Areskou*, or kneel before the ever-burning altars of the heathens, or worship the sun! Farewell JERRY—do not, I pray you, envy me my situation—do not tell our simple maids of those foolish fashions, of which I have given you an account, lest they should dye their faces red with poke-berries, bore their ears into riddles, and drink vinegar, eat pickles and swallow tobacco juice to reduce their bodies; but when I return, may I find them blooming like the flowers of our valleys, in native simplicity, and untortured by fashion. Your's, ROBERT RUSTIC.

Poetical Department.

ORIGINAL.

THE WISE MAN.

HOW silly, oft I say,
Are those we call our sages;
Who doze from day to day
O'er learning's musty pages.
Grow they in wisdom thus?
Nay, faith 'bout madmen's capers,
They make as great a fuss,
As madam in the vapours;
And are as much in pain
As if, no hope consoling,
They o'er and o'er a plain
Of pointed nails were rolling.
What's truly wise in man,
But pushing thro' life's riot,
As happy as he can,
As smoothly and as quiet?

There was a rustic wag,
The jolliest of the jolly,
Who ne'er was known to lag
In chacing melancholy:
In pleasure seldom foil'd,
He pleasure still was courting;
Nay, even when he toil'd,
'Twas just to him like sporting.
How diff'rent in his looks
From those pronounced his betters,

Yet, far from knowing books,
He scarcely knew his letters.
When battle's trumpet peal'd,
And all the world was ringing;
He, cheery thro' his field,
Was at his plow-tail singing.
His dame was neat and snug,
And when at eve he met her,
A lusty buss or hug
Was his—he wish'd no better.
When towns were level'd flat,
And grave curs sad did yelp it;
He said, 'whoe'er did that
I'm sure I couldn't help it.'
And so he pass'd it o'er,
Nor meddled with it after,
Enjoy'd his humble store,
Enjoy'd his joke and laughter:
Nor ever whined, nor sigh'd
But laughter still commended;
And so he lived and died,
Beginning as he ended.

Now one so wise point out,
Who reads thro' ev'ry season,
Indeed you'll not, I doubt,
And for a special reason.— GLORMON.

ORIGINAL.

THE MODEST QUAKER GIRL,

SUPERIOUR TO FASHION.

WHAT victim of fashion will deign to compare
Herself to a quaker girl, modest and fair?
In an easy succession, thro' life's rugged road,
She passes contented, nor envies the load
Of gewgaws and baubles that others have worn;
Such trifles, her beauty can never adorn!
Let the belles of the day, in spangles array'd,
Use white-wash and rouge, till, nature decay'd,
By the patches of art, no longer can charm,
Then where is the bosom such beauty could warm?
Tho' the loose chemisette all their features display,
Exposed by art in the scanty array;

Behold in the quaker a contrast, in pride,
She exposes no beauties that Virtue would hide;
Calm, decent, contented, she knows to despise
The tinsel of coquettes that others may prize;
Not fickle, not changing, tho' Fashion parades
Its tawdry form'd garments, and Virtue invades;
Unlike airy Fancy, aloft on the wing,
Well pleased with a rattle and charm'd with a ring:
In her sabbath-day garment, as plain as her mind,
She passes to meeting composed and resign'd;
Her native simplicity, freedom and ease,
Hath charms that kind Nature intended to please;
No wig, frieze or cushion, e'er tortured her hair,
No art e'er disguised, or the rosy or fair;
No needless employ to her millener gives,
Nor the sweet-scented frissieur ever receives
A cent of her cash to arrange a deform,
To disfigure her pate, like a witch in a storm:
The pattern her grandame for ages before,
Had chose for her covering and modestly wore,
Continues her choice, 'tis her pride to conceal,
The beauties that Virtue forbids to reveal;
No fashion discloses the swell of her breast,
Nor custom can shorten the length of her waist;
With temper unruffled, calm, cheerful and gay
She disdains every lure to tempt Nature astray;
Nor holds out a beacon for lovers to gain,
To add to her list, or swell a long train
Of coxcombs and triflers, bucks, bullies and beaux,
They're alike her aversion, and marked her foes;
Her manners unsuited the coxcomb to charm,
The buck and the trifler, her virtue disarm;
The bully may bluster, boast, banter, and swear
"She's charming by heavens!" but lighter than air
His bravo and bluster the bully displays,
Contrasted with merit, it ceases to blaze:
The toy tinsel'd beau may dance, caper and scrape,
And outdo dame Nature in monkey or ape;
Her pity excited, disdains the fond ass,
Tho' clothed with assurance that nought can surpass;
Thrice happy the youth by Heaven design'd,
Her lover and husband, much pleasure he'll find,
She'll soothe all his cares thro' the journey of life,
His friend ever true, an affectionate wife! E.